CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Situation arising due to depletion and extinction of population of Tigers in protected areas

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (Bihar): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Environment and Forests to the situation arising out of the depletion of the population of tigers and in some cases their extinction in many protected areas in the country and the action taken by the Government in regard thereto.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): Sir, should I lay the statement on the Table of the House?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, you read it.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Do you want to me to respond right now? Sir, a detailed statement has been prepared.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let the statement be distributed. You have to read it.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Should I read it? Why do I have to read it? Let me lay it on the Table of the House and then we can have a discussion.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Is it a long statement?

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, it is a fairly detailed statement.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The usual practice is, the hon. Member calls the attention of the Minister and the Minister makes a statement and later on the Members seek clarifications. ...*(Interruptions)*... The procedure is, once the Minister makes a statement, on that statement the hon. Members seek clarifications.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, I will make a brief statement. I have a detailed statement, if the hon. Members want...

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That can be distributed. ...*(Interruptions)*... You can mention the salient features of the statement.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, a detailed statement has been prepared. It is being circulated to all the Members. I don't want to go through the formality of reading this statement. ...*(Interruptions)*... Sir, I will not read the statement. I will make a brief comment and then the hon. Members can make their points.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Whatever points you want to highlight, you highlight those points. After that the hon. Members would seek clarifications.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: First of all, I would like to thank the hon. Member for calling the attention of the Government to a very important subject. Although it deals with tigers, its importance

goes beyond tigers. It is called Project Tiger, but it really goes at the heart of the protection of our eco system. We have 37 Project Tiger Reserves in the country. They account for something like four to five per cent of the area under forest in our country. And, when we include the Buffer Zone that we are trying to build around the Project Tiger areas, the total area under Project Tiger would be anywhere between 8 and 10 per cent of the tiger population. One of the fathers of Project Tiger is sitting here. It was inaugurated on 1st April, 1973, and Dr. Karan Singh was present at the inauguration function at the Corbett National Park. Now, although it is called 'Project Tiger', it goes beyond tiger. It deals with the areas under forests, and almost 300 to 350 rivers of our country emanate from within the Project Tiger areas. So, it is linked with the water security issue as well. Therefore, I am grateful to the hon. Member for calling our attention to this issue, in the last couple of months, it is true that the loss of the tiger population in two important Project Tiger Reserve areas, that is, Sariska in Rajasthan and Panna in Madhya Pradesh, has caused grave concern amongst the larger community in our country. Out of the 37 Project Tiger Reserve areas in our country, we have conducted an exercise categorising these Project Tiger areas, .and I am pleased to say that 12 out of these 37 are in good condition, where there is good tiger population, where the tiger density can be considered to be very, very good. There are six or seven Project Tiger areas where the condition is satisfactory, but we need to improve the situation. Further, what is alarming is that out of the 37 Project Tiger areas, there are 16 Project Tiger areas which are in the danger zone, where tigers have either vanished, or, are on the brink of vanishing. The causes are different, in some areas, you have ecological problems. In some areas like Simlipal in Orissa, you have problems of Extreme Left Wing Naxalite activity impinging on the forest areas and Project Tiger areas. Sir, I would be glad to share with the House the analysis that we have done for each of these 37 areas. The hon. Member is right; out of these 37 areas, there are 16 Project Tiger areas where the situation is truly alarming, where we are going to lose the tiger population, if we do not take appropriate interventions quickly. Now, in the last month-and-a-half, the Government has moved quite decisively to intervene, to ensure that Project Tiger is implemented in a more forceful manner than it has been in the past. The hon. Member will be glad to know that this year, that is, 2009-10, the allocations for Project Tiger is Rs.240 crores. It is not a small sum; it is quite a substantial sum of money. And, over the entire Eleventh Plan period, we are going to be spending like Rs.650 crores on Project Tiger as compared to Rs.150 crores in the Tenth Plan period.

The second major intervention that we have made is that we are now going to have a Tripartite MoU involving the Central Government, the State Governments and each of the 37 Project Tiger areas. This MoU will spell out what the Central Government's responsibilities are, what the State Government's responsibilities are and what the Project Directors' responsibilities are. I would like to bring to the attention of the hon. Member that the only Project Tiger area, which does not have a

Director, till today, is the Valmiki Tiger Reserve in his own State of Bihar. I have brought this to the attention of the hon. Chief Minister, and I would request the hon. Member to use his good offices to ensure that very soon there is a full-time Project Director for the Valmiki Tiger Reserve. This is an important Tiger Reserve in Bihar, which is in the danger zone, where tigers are on the brink of vanishing. So, this is the second thing that we have done, where we are going to have this Tripartite MoU. I am having a meeting with all the 37 Project Directors on the 25th of this month, and we are going to sign the first of the MoUs initially.

And the money that we are going to give to the State Governments would be through the mechanism of the MoUs. Sir, the third thing that we are doing is, we are creating a core inviolate area within the Project Tiger Area where there will be no human interaction, and there will be a buffer zone around the core where there will be human settlements. Now, this involves the relocation of almost 80,000 to 1,00,000 families from within the core to the buffer zone. Now, this is very time-consuming and it is a political, social process and I am pleased to inform the hon. Member that the Government of India has taken a decision, it is already being implemented, that every family that is to be relocated from the core area will get compensation of ten lakhs of rupees. It used to be one lakh of rupees, now it is ten lakhs of rupees. This has already been implemented in many parts. I myself have seen very recently what is India's most successful model of relocation. This is at the Bhadra Tiger Reserve in Karnataka where almost 730 families have been relocated from the core of the Project Tiger Area to a village outside, and Bhadra, today, is one of the good Project Tiger Reserves. A similar experiment has started at Nagarhole in Karnataka. Sir, recently, I have been to Corbett, where we are trying to initiate a similar experiment.

Sir, the fourth intervention that we have done is to raise a Special Tiger Protection Force in order to police the Project Tiger Areas. Sir, here I must share with the hon. Members I have certain reservations on the way the Special Tiger Protection Force has been conceived in the past. The Special Tiger Protection Force has been conceived of as a bunch of policemen policing the Project Tiger Areas. I am not entirely in agreement and sympathy with this. I feel local communities are the best protectors of the forests and the Project Tiger Areas. Recently, when I was in Corbett, I met almost 200 families of one Gujjar who have been associated with Corbett for centuries, and I took a decision that at Corbett, the Tiger Protection Force will not be of policemen coming from outside but would be of local communities, the local-one Gujjars would be recruited as para-protection forces, and they would be given the responsibility for protecting the local reserve. I believe, in many Project Tiger Areas, we do not need policemen. We need to create incentives for local communities to protect the eco-system, and, I think, given Government support, Centre and the State, we will be able to achieve our objective.

Sir, I don't want to get into a lot of detail, it is there in my statement. I would be glad to answer any question that Members may have. But, I want to associate myself with the concern of the hon.

Member. This is truly an alarming situation. It is not just a tiger issue, as I said, it is a eco-system issue. In fact, I would like to call the National Tiger Conservation Authority, the National Tiger and Wildlife Conservation Authority, it goes beyond tigers, it goes beyond animal-human interaction, as I said. It goes into the very heart of the protection of our forests and it goes into the very heart of water security. The situation is alarming. I appeal to hon. Members to extend the cooperation through the mechanism of the State Governments because ultimately, Sir, the money is that of the Centre, the action is that of the States. The Project Tiger Areas are owned by the State Governments. The Project Directors are appointed by the State Governments. The poachers are caught by the State Governments. In Panna, I want to bring to the hon. Members attention, we have a 200-page report of a special investigating team, which I have sent to the hon. Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. The people who poached, people who killed have been identified, but action has to be taken by the State Government. I request the hon. Member to use his good offices with the hon. Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh so that action is taken. Sir, I believe, that if we take action against poachers in one case, the message will go across the country. Unfortunately, we have not taken action in any instance so far. Panna is a test case. I appeal to the hon. Member that we will support you, we will provide all the financial assistance, we will provide all the technical assistance. But the State Government has to take the action against the poachers who have been identified. Once this action has been taken, I believe, Sir, we would be on a stronger footing as far as Project Tiger is concerned. Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The hon. Minister has given a detailed reply. Mr. Rudy, you may seek pointed clarifications.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY (Bihar): Mr. Minister made a very candid reply.

इन्होंने सब विषयों को बड़े ढंग से रखा। राज्य सरकारों की भी जिम्मेदारी है और प्रत्यक्ष रूप से जिम्मेदारी वहां होनी भी चाहिए क्योंकि जितना बड़ा एरिया और टाइगर रिज़र्व्ज हैं, ये प्रमुखतया राज्यों की परिधि में हैं। महोदय, जिस प्रकार से हमारा अभियान है या केन्द्र सरकार उसे करना चाहती है, सबसे महत्वपूर्ण विषय है कि आखिर इसे कार्यान्वित करने के लिए केन्द्र सरकार और राज्य सरकार का समन्वय कैसे स्थापित होता है? We have to get down to the reality. It is not the question of the States or the Centre. If you remember, Sir, Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book, the most read book on animals, the inspiration was the Corbett's National Park. It is absolutely shocking. 2000 में ही सरिस्का में, there were not tigers. Absolutely no tigers. Everyone in the country knew it, the world knows it. क्योंकि यह चीज ऐसी है कि पूरी दुनिया के संरक्षण करने वाले लोग इसमें चिंतित रहते हैं। महोदय, यह मध्य प्रदेश की सरकार, बिहार की सरकार या किसी और की सरकार का विषय नहीं है। अब से चार महीने पहले एक अंतिम सबसे बड़ा जो मेल टाइगर था, पन्ना में उसका मृत शरीर मिला। उसके बाद हम लोगों ने, पता नहीं सरकारें भी इस बात को दबाने की कोशिश करती हैं, हो सकता है कुछ प्रयास हुआ हो दो female tigress को उठाकर वहां rehabilitate करने के लिए लाया गया। लेकिन वहां तो कोई मेल टाइगर था ही नहीं। उस समय तक तो सब समाप्त हो चुका था। जब केन्द्र सरकार से अनुमति मांगी जाती है कि हमें एक वन से उठाकर जानवरों को दूसरे वन में पहुंचाना है, उस समय तो आपकी नींद खुल जानी चाहिए।

उस समय तो आपको जाग जाना चाहिए और पूछना चाहिए कि आखिर यह परिस्थिति क्यों है? आपके पास भी अपने साधन हैं। जब ऐसी परिस्थिति आ गयी थी कि जानवर वहां नहीं थे, If the tigers were not there, then it is a matter of concern for the nation. Project Tiger was an ambitious project and it was started in 1973 by Mrs. Gandhi; of course, it was an admirable action at that point of time. Dr. Karan Singh was associated with it. At that time, the tiger population was fallen to 1800. From 1800, the tiger population in 1988 went up to around 4500. Now, this year, the census says, it has come down to around 1300 or 1400. Just imagine what has been happening. ये जानवर कहां जा रहे हैं, ये टाइगर्स कहां जा रहे हैं? भारत से नेपाल जा रहे हैं और नेपाल से चीन जा रहे हैं, महोदय, अगर narcotics के बाद सबसे बड़ी स्मगलिंग इस देश में किसी चीज़ की है तो वह बाघों की तस्करी है। केन्या, जहां उस समय विधि व्यवस्था बिल्कुल खराब थी, और massive poaching हो रही थी, Today, 70% of the national revenue generation in Kenya is jungle tourism! This is a resource. Yes, there is a conflict between tourism and animal population, but we have to devise modalities. Today, it is a catastrophe. It has hit the nation extremely and it is just not killing; it is poaching, killing and also poisoning! Our civilisation, our heredity everything is linked with something in the wildlife, जानवरों को सिर्फ मारा ही नहीं जाता है, trap ही नहीं किया जाता है, फंदे ही नहीं लगाए जाते, इन्हें ज़हर दिया जाता है। This is an unacceptable human action. Sir, even if we have to go to the States, I am sorry to say that the Minister pointed out three States, I think, he should have kept the States out of it. Because, if you see in Andhra Pradesh, the tiger population which was 192 has come down to 95. In. Maharashtra, it was 238 and now has come down to 103. Even in a State like Orissa, it was 173, it has come down to 45. If I have to read out the list of animals or tigers killed every year, it is in the range of 40-50. The list is a shocking one. It is a Government published list. In 1994 it is 95, in 1995, 125 tigers were killed, so on and so forth; in 2001, 72 were killed. In 2004, 34 killed. It has been going on rampantly. It is a matter of national concern. जिस तरह से जू में जाकर जानवरों को दिखाते हैं, भविष्य में हमें अपने बच्चों को बताने के लिए नहीं रहेगा कि ऐसा भी कोई प्रकृति में जानवर रहता था। यह स्थिति आ रही है, हमारे और आपके सामने आ रही है। महोदय, पूरी व्यवस्था है। मैं यह कहना चाहूंगा कि there are critical landscapes. जिसमें जानवर रहते हैं, इसमें व्यवस्था सरकार करती है, राज्य सरकार करती है, केन्द्र सरकार करती है, लेकिन इनकी व्यवस्था में जो हैं, उनकी सेंसेविटी क्या है, उनका प्यार क्या है, उनका प्रेम क्या है, उनका पर्यावरण से लेना-देना क्या है, वैसे लोग कौन हैं? इंडियन फॉरेस्ट सर्विस। Sir, the Indian Forest Service was supposed to be on a par with the IAS and IPS. Unfortunately, everything in this country moves under IAS. तो आई.एफ.एस. का कोई अस्तित्व नहीं है। आई.एफ.एस. का जो ऑफिसर होगा, वह सेंट्रल सर्विसेज़ में यूपीएससी से बहाल होगा और जिला कलेक्टर को रिपोर्ट करेगा। इस देश में जब तक अस्तित्व बहाल नहीं किया जायेगा, तब तक यह कार्य ठीक प्रकार से नहीं होगा। आज भी ये पदाधिकारी राज्य के चीफ सेक्रेटरी को रिपोर्ट करते हैं, जो इनके पीसीसीएफ हैं, वे भारत सरकार में सेक्रेटरी, एनवायरमेंट को रिपोर्ट करते हैं। इसलिए उनको स्वायत्तता मिलनी चाहिए। मान लीजिए, it is an All India Service, the Indian Forest Service is an All India Service, but it does not work like that, it does not have a status, it does not have a representation. मैं तो समझता हूं कि जानवरों के मामले में देश में राजनैतिक पार्टियों से आगे बढ़कर यह तय करना चाहिए। हमारे जैसे लोग और मेरे जैसे इस बीच में बहुत सारे

पत्रकार होंगे, नेता होंगे, कलाकार होंगे, यहां पर जया जी हैं और डा. कर्ण सिंह जी हैं और बहुत सारे लोग हैं, इन सब लोगों को यह जिम्मेदारी दे दी जाए। अवैतनिक रूप से इस देश में लाखों लोग हैं, जो अवैतनिक रूप से इन जानवरों की रक्षा के लिए अपना समय निकाल कर के दे सकते हैं, everybody is committed but we do not have a mechanism, we do not have an inspiration. We are still completely dependent on the political set-up or the administrative set-up, जैसे केन्द्र में आपकी आई.बी. है, सीबीआई है, सेंट्रल पैरामिलेट्री फोर्सेज हैं, आखिर में इतनी सारी केन्द्रीय संस्थाएं हैं। जब देश के ऊपर संकट आता है, तो आप किसी चीज़ का निर्माण करते हैं। आज अगर आवश्यकता है, as he mentioned about the Tiger Protection Force. Do not make it a policing force, make it a motivational force: create a motivational force of people from all walks of life, and recruit them. They could be people coming from the Armed Forces who would give their lives to protect the tigers, they could be people from the Naval Service, they could be people from the aviation sector, they could be journalists, etc. Anyone from any sector who can just walk in and say, "I want to be a part of this force." There has to be a consensus built up in this country. This is a matter of grave concern; it is a matter, which needs an intervention across party lines. There cannot be State politics. I do not know the mechanism. We have the State Subjects and the Central Subjects. But this alone cannot be left to the States. There has to be intervention at our level. In this climate change, the tiger needs shelter, it needs water, and it needs a place. These days you find animals loitering in the cities, they go and sit in the drawing rooms of individuals. Two years ago, a leopard went into a house at Mohali, Chandigarh, and was watching television. These animals do not have space. We have almost encroached on their habitat. Now, we have to be sensitive. After all, we are a sensitive civilisation; we are a sensitive country. This animal also needs a space.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: Sir, we need volunteers for this action. Money will not sort it out; policing will not sort it out. There has to be a mass campaign, the students, the children, the unorganised labour, everyone has to be incorporated, the journalists, the media men, the photographers, the activists, the politicians, the police, there has to be a great action plan because this is a catastrophe, this animal is going to be extinct. If we do not do it now, if this House cannot do it, if the Parliament cannot do it, if the Government at this point of time does not realise the importance, I can say the way it has happening since 1973, the tiger population goes up and then it comes down. It goes up and comes down, it is poaching, it is killing, merciless killing, it is the cruel treatment meted out to the animals. Sir, my only humble submission to the House and the Minister is this. I am very happy with his reply. He has said everything candidly; he has said that the States have not performed; even the Centre has not performed. We have lost on it. We have to motivate the entire action programme and I would request the hon. Minister that this concern, which he has addressed, the House, I am sure, would associate itself with this cause and find a long-term action plan to protect this animal. Thank you.

DR. KARAN SINGH (NCT of Delhi): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, it is very heartening, after a long time, to hear two emotional, intellectual and committed speeches, one by my good friend and colleague, Jairam Ramesh and the other by Mr. Rajiv Pratap Rudy. I would just like to inform the House that for the first 22 years after Independence, our National Animal was the lion, because of the Ashoka Lions. When I entered Mrs. Gandhi's Cabinet in 1967, she asked me also to become the Chairman of the Indian Board for Wildlife and in my first meeting I discovered to my surprise that our National animal was the lion. Now, the lion as you know, Mr. Deputy Chairman, is only found in one part of Western India, whereas the tiger is found all the way from Uttarakhand down to Kerala and all the way from the Sunderbans to Rajasthan. So, in that Board for Wildlife, we had a Resolution passed requesting the Government to change the National Animal from the lion to the tiger and that was the decision taken by the Cabinet and that is how the tiger became the National Animal, I just thought I would inform the House about this because many people may not know about this.

Then, after it had become the National Animal I worked out 'Project Tiger'. Indiraji was fully supporting it because she was a committed conservationist. That 'Project Tiger', as has been pointed out, was launched by me in the Corbett National Park in 1973 with K. S. Shankhala, an excellent officer from Rajasthan as the first Director of 'Project Tiger. We chose nine projects and it had become in the first eight to ten years one of the world's most successful conservation project. The WWF, the World Widelife Fund in Geneva was also helping us in many ways and it had become a showpiece for conservation.

Then, the political will ebbed and the whole situation started deteriorating. Today, it is absolutely true, it is a tragic situation, is a catastrophic situation because we had at one time over 4000 tigers and they have now been reduced to one-quarter of them. It is sheer criminal activity and the shame is, Mr. Deputy Chairman, not a single person to the best of my knowledge has been put in jail. There are strong, stiff punishments. How is it that there is collusion everywhere? Three thousand tigers have been killed, crores and crores have been made by the sale of those skins and tiger parts and tiger bones through Tibet into China and into Nepal and not one person has been caught. There is a massive fraud, there is massive connivance between the smugglers, who are very rich, who buy off the forest officers and buy off the policemen and are continuing in this trade.

So, I would just simply on this occasion do not want to go into too many details because I have not been in touch with the detailed situation, but I would like to say, unless there is a political will on behalf of the Government of India and the State Governments you will never save any tigers. I am very glad that we have a dynamic young Minister in charge who is going around actually visiting tiger reserves and if that cooperation is there, the State Governments have to cooperate mainly because it is their land, it is their officers. They are the ones who run this whole thing. The Centre is simply the catalytic agent to try and help. Also the Panchayati Raj institution, not only the State Governments at the Centre but the Zila Parishads, the situation at the *grameen* level have to be involved in this whole

process. I hope that in these 37 tiger resorts, 20 of them are almost in a tiger less condition, the situation will improve. The tiger, I would like to say, is a symbol of our ecological pyramid. The tiger by itself is a beautiful animal, there is no doubt about it. It is involved with Durga. Durga rides on the lion incidentally. The Vishnu Durga rides on a lion, while the Shiv Durga rides on a tiger. Many of you must have wondered why the difference. This is also something you might be interested in. *Ayyappan* is involved with the tiger. So, the tiger is part of our folklore, it is part of our culture, it is part of our tradition, it is part of our heritage and if we as citizens of a responsible country are unable to save the tiger, it is a shame and disgrace to this entire country. Thankyou.

SHRI MOINUL HASSAN (West Bengal): Sir, first, I must congratulate the hon. Minister for his candid and extraordinary statement he has made. I have only small 2-3 clarifications to seek from the hon. Minister.

The first one is regarding Section 5 mentioned in the Statement. It is about the ecological factor in the reduction of tiger count. Very recently, there is an unprecedented Cyclone Aila hit my State of West Bengal and Sundarbans is also very badly affected. Not only the Royal Bengal Tiger but also the other wildlife living in Sundarbans is endangered. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what action his Ministry will take in this regard.

My second point is this. We have seen regularly in the newspapers, especially those who are living in West Bengal and around Bengal, tigers come out of forest into the near villages. In such circumstances, the wildlife will be in danger. I firmly believe and share the same opinion that public protection is the main protection for wildlife, particularly tiger. But, it is a fact that, as far as public protection is concerned, we should build up national consensus to protect our national wealth – Tiger. What is the opinion of his Ministry? Is there any review, to take any appropriate action? If yes, I request the hon. Minister to give us the details.

My third point is: Very recently, I have seen a news item in a newspaper that an electronic microchip is inserted into the body of tiger and leave it in jungle or forest. I would like to know whether it is necessary. If it is necessary, why it has been done?

Sir, my last point is this. Some people and NGOs are advocating protection of tiger. They are doing in a different form. I have no objection. But, these people resist the implementation of Protection of Tribal Rights Act that we have passed in this very House. I don't know whether the hon. Minister aware of this. I wish to know what would be the remedy for this from the hon. Minister.

These are the three observations I wanted to make and hope the hon. Minister would reply to them. Thank you.

SHRI RAMA CHANDRA KHUNTIA (Orissa): Sir, this is a very important subject and, if I may say so, it is because of our – State Government – inefficiency we could not protect tigers in our country.

But, fortunately, we have a very efficient Minister and we do expect, as per his statement, honourable Minister will take appropriate steps to protect tigers in our country.

Sir, somebody has rightly said that conservation of tiger, in some places, is relating to the whole economy of the country. Conservation and protection of tiger is the protection and conservation of forest and conservation of forest has an impact on environment, ecology and climate and in the large-scale generation of employment. So, sustainable forest development is also helpful, as it is accepted internationally, for the sustainable growth of employment. And, rightly, it has got its impact on the economy.

Sir, what I want to mention here first is about the tiger census. What is the methodology that we are adopting to count the number of tiger? How are we arriving at the figure? Is it on the basis of poaching or whether we are arriving at the figure on the basis of existence of tiger or counting footprints? I would like to know whether it is foolproof and what is the methodology we are applying for census of tiger or to arrive at a conclusion about the death of tiger. Sir, tigers are not seen in Simlipal, Sunabeda and Satkosia in my State and Arunachal, Himalayan line and Corbett Park. Only census is given on the basis of the sight of foot or something. I do not know. It is not fully correct. So, my question is: Whether the hon. Minister will apply a methodology to determine the exact census of tiger which will be helpful to protect them.

Sir, second point I wish to make is this. We should not have a 'police approach' that just something occurred and we reached there. The hon. Minister has rightly said to utilize the services of the local people and also NGOs. Who are also showing interest in the protection of the wild animals. Can that also be used?

Thirdly, for the protection of tiger, we not only require the Tiger Project, but also the landscape of the Tiger Project because if the nearby forests are also not protected, the Tiger Project alone would not be able to give protection to tigers. So, I believe that the landscape of the forests, near the Tiger Project, also needs protection. Also, the legal status should be given to the Tiger Project and the landscape.

Fourthly, I would like to mention here that with the increase in population after the Independence, the domestic animals have also increased and, thus, encroached the tiger-habitant areas. It also encroached the water, which was used by the tigers. It encroached the area that was used by the tigers. So, sometimes there is a conflict between the tigers and other animals also. As the hon. Member from West Bengal has said, what should be our approach to this. As per the policy of the Government, giving lands to the tribals in the forest areas is also a correct and right decision. We should approve this. We should support this. But, simultaneously, it should also not affect the tiger habitats in the forests. Sir, I want to mention here one thing. We had an Action Plan for wild life protection in the year 2002. But, is it a fact that we could not achieve the target and we could not

implement the Action Plan? I would also like to know from the hon. Minister what steps would be taken by the Government to implement that Action Plan.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI (Maharashtra): Sir, the Minister accepted that out of all the reservations, 37 are in acceptable conditions, 60 are in precarious condition. Hon. Member, Shri Rudy, read out the figures, State by State, how the population of the tigers has declined. Dr. Karan Singh ji also laid down the philosophy of the protection of tiger. I remember that this question had once come up for discussion.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, I would like to request the hon. Member to yield for a minute. Out of 37 Project Tiger areas, 12 are in good condition, 9 are in satisfactory condition, and 16, not 60, are in dangerous condition.

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Sir, I stand corrected. I heard wrongly. But the general conclusion is, whatever the method of census, the tiger population is in a precarious situation. When this question came up for discussion, I think, we were discussing the same issue at that time, I had pointed out that this approach of taking anti-poaching measures is bound to fail. There are other threatened species also in the world. And, I had pointed out, at that time, that crocodile was saved in Australia, not by anti-poaching legislation, but by actively encouraging markets in crocodile parts. Similarly, in China, efforts are being made to develop a market in the tiger parts, with the result even private citizens are, now, developing tiger farms and the results are excellent. I would like to point out here that recently, there was an item in the newspaper that a single citizen in Nagpur alone had developed a population of twelve tigers in a city like Nagpur.

The hon. Minister is, no doubt, energetic, but the approach is wrong. If he goes only by the police-and-criminal approach, by the time I die, I think, there will be no tiger left in this country. I would like to seek a clarification. Has the Minister acquainted himself about the experiments made in Australia and China for protection of crocodiles and tigers? If 'yes', what are his reactions to that? Can we implement that in India?

श्री कांजीभाई पटेल (गुजरात) : सर, 2006 में जब यहां पर Wild Life Protection Act डिस्कशन के लिए आया था, उसमें कुछ अमेंडमेंट्स थे, तब भी मैंने कुछ बातें कही थी। मैंने यह कहा था कि इस काम में आदिवासियों को ज्यादा-से-ज्यादा इनवॉल्व किया जाए। मुझे आज खुशी है कि मंत्री जी ने यह बताया है कि वह उनको इनवॉल्व करने की सोच रहे हैं। लेकिन, Wild Life Protection Act में जो सुधार हुआ और इसके जो रूल्स बने, उनमें आदिवासियों को इनवॉल्व करने की इतनी गम्भीरता अभी भी नहीं है। आज भी आदिवासी भूखा है। उसके पास खाने को कुछ नहीं है। उसे कुछ भी मिल जाएगा तो वह पेड़ काट देगा। जंगल घटने से हमारे व्याघ्र भी घटे हैं। हमारे शास्त्रों ने जो कहा, उस पर गौर से सोचना चाहिए, कि "बुभुक्षितो किम न करोति पापम्, क्षीणा नराः निष्करुणा भवन्ति।" आज आदिवासी भूखा है। उसके पास खाने को कुछ नहीं है तो वह क्या करेगा? इसलिए उसको विश्वास में लेने के लिए और उसका पेट पालने के लिए पहले सोचना चाहिए, तभी आगे जाकर कुछ हो सकता है, ऐसा मेरा मानना है। आपका धन्यवाद।

SHRI TIRUCHI SIVA (Tamil Nadu): Sir, the Minister, during his speech, suggested of involving the local people for protecting the tigers and the eco-system, instead of using the conventional police or the foresters.

Sir, it is a very good move; involving them will not only provide them the employment opportunities, but they may also adopt some traditional methods to protect the environment. I would like to know whether it is only in the concept level or it has already been implemented. If not, I would like to know when it will be implemented at the earliest.

DR. CHANDAN MITRA (Nominated): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, first, I must compliment Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy for bringing this Call Attention Motion and also compliment the Minister for giving a very detailed and excellent reply to an absolutely critical subject.

Of course, it is always humbling to speak after Dr. Karan Singh has spoken because his knowledge of the subject as well as of the philosophical connotations, I think, are absolutely unmatched in both Houses of Parliament.

Sir, I will just take two minutes to outline a few points arising from the Minister's response to the Call Attention Motion. Sir, the Minister said that if one poacher is caught and sentenced, a message will be sent across the board to the entire country. I entirely agree; but there have been major poachers who have been caught. I would like to remind the Minister, through you, Sir, of Sansar Chand who was one of the biggest poachers and who was responsible for the decimation of Sariska. When Sariska lost all tigers, he was arrested and, cases are going on against him. So, at least, you see, it is not that poachers have not been caught in the past; it is not that poachers are not going to be caught. But the fact is that no action is taken; courts take ages to resolve it, and, here, my suggestion is that since this matter is of critical importance, I would urge the Government to consider setting up of a separate court, fast-track court, for curbing poaching.

My second point, Sir, the Minister has talked about a core-reserve area. There was a plan for setting up Critical Tiger Habitats. I would like to know what is the progress that has been made in formulation of the Critical Tiger Habitats. The idea that he has spoken about, employing local people, is a very good idea. I am myself familiar with many of these tiger reserves and sanctuaries. I go there twice or thrice a year, and, in my visits, I have found that although the local people would be very happy to participate in a protection and conservation project, they are extremely ill-equipped; they don't have even mobile phones. Mobile phones don't operate in most park areas of Corbett Park, for instance. They don't have walkie-talkies and when poachers move around, there is no way in which even sincere Forest Service Officers can inform the nearest outpost about the activities of poachers. I think, providing equipment, especially, communication equipment, to those responsible for maintaining wild-life sanctuaries is very important.

Sir, one new point has come up recently. This experiment of re-locating tigers has been done in Sariska and is being attempted in Panna. Now, there are very strong views both ways about the *in situ* breeding of tigers and the question of what would happen to the prey base. Now, if tigers are strolling out of some of their natural habitats, it is on account of the declining prey base, as the Minister must be aware. We had this big incident in Uttar Pradesh where a tiger strolled out of Dudhwa, moved around in Faizabad and Barabanki and, unfortunately, it was finally eliminated because it was threatening the population. Now, I would like to know from the Minister if the Government has given serious thought to the question of *in situ* breeding because *in situ* breeding has its own problems, especially with regard to the prey base.

Sir, there are good examples and there are bad examples. The good example of a complete regeneration is a sanctuary called Katarniya Ghat in UP, which at one stage it had been devastated by Maoists from Nepal but today, it has been regenerated and the tiger population has returned. In Kanha, on the other hand, there was a story that during a VIP visit, trying to oblige the VIPs, the Director of the Park, took out his jeep for a night safari, and knocked down and killed a tiger cub. Now, has this matter been probed? Has the person been punished? If those who are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the tiger are going to indulge in this kind of activities, how can you expect the tiger to survive?

Finally, Sir, I would like to draw the hon. Minister's attention, particularly because the former Minister of Tourism is sitting right next to him, to the question of tourist *versus* tiger protection. I think, this is also a call that the Government has to take. Excess of tourism in certain National Parks, particularly, Kahna, has been a source of great concern and I would urge the hon. Minister to look into this aspect also.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA (Rajasthan): Mr. Deputy Chairman, I would like to put a question to the hon. Minister. I am very happy that Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy took up this issue to which the Minister gave a very good reply, and he was very positive about it. I would like to congratulate him on this. Sir, I am basically a Zoologist and my concern about animals is not restricted only to the tiger but to other animals also, especially birds. We have so many bird sanctuaries, but there is lack of water, especially in Rajasthan. The lakes do not have water and most of the aquatic birds are not flying over there. Cranes used to come from Siberia to the Bharatpur Sanctuary. Now, because of the lack of water and because of the war in Afghanistan, their population has reduced to five or six. I would like to urge the hon. Minister that while he is taking up the project tiger so sincerely, he should also look into other sanctuaries and birds and animals that are facing the danger of extinction. What action you are going to take about them? You should also think about that while making the policy. I am very happy that you are taking such a great interest in this.

SHRIMATI VASANTHI STANLEY (Tamil Nadu): Thank you, Mr, Deputy Chairman, for giving me this opportunity, I would like to add one more question, please. The hon. Minister has mentioned that NGOs' help would be taken in preserving the environment as well as for tiger preservation. I would like to know if there is any particular scheme for NGOs to be utilised. Has any budgetary provision been made for that?

श्री आर. सी. सिंह (पश्चिमी बंगाल) : महोदय, मै जानना चाहूंगा कि टाइगर्स की संख्या कितनी है? इनकी correct संख्या की जांच के लिए जो एजेंसीज़ हैं, उनका साइंटिफिक सिस्टम क्या है? महोदय, पश्चिम बंगाल में वर्ष 2008 में Wild Life Institute of India ने सर्वे करके बताया कि 8 टाइगर्स है और स्टेट फॉरेस्ट डिपार्टमेंट का कहना है कि वहां 12 टाइगर्स है। अब correct number क्या है और इसके scientific measures क्या होंगे? दूसरी बात मैं कहना चाहूंगा कि अगर टाइगर्स को बचाना है तो adequate finance और training की जरूरत है। इसके लिए सरकार के पास क्या व्यवस्था है? तीसरी बात मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहूंगा कि हमारे जो रूल्स-रेगुलेशंस है, इनको implement करने के लिए जो हमारी एजेंसीज़ है, वे कितनी सक्षम हैं? उनको और ज्यादा strengthen करने की क्या व्यवस्था कर रहे हैं? मैं मिनिस्टर से एक बात जानना चाहूंगा कि 2005 में tigers and wilderness watch के लिए एक Parliamentarian Forum बना था, जिसमें श्री ज्योतिरादित्य सिंधिया, श्री राहुल गांधी, श्रीमती रेणुका चौधरी, श्री बी.जे. पंडा, श्री सुरेश प्रभु, श्री राजीव प्रताप रूडी ...(**व्यवधान**)..

श्री उपसभापति : कमेटी के मैम्बर्स के नाम की जरूरत नही है।

श्री आर. सी. सिंह : उन्होंने कहा था कि चार महीने के भीतर एक रिपोर्ट submit करेंगे। मैं यह जानना चाहूंगा कि क्या रिपोर्ट submit हुई है और उसका result क्या हुआ?

DR. SHRIMATI KAPILA VATSYAYAN (Nominated): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I rise to comment on this issue which has been raised here. There is a brief but fine reply and the statement by the Minister. And its history has been given by Dr. Karan Singh, who is affectionately called 'Tiger'. Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, every other point has been raised but there is a point of view of the future of this country and our young generation. This takes one to the issue and I am sure that the hon. Minister will address this issue of the relationship of the Project Tiger and the entire environment and the debate on education for sustainable development. The entire focus of the next generation has to be that the human being is dependent on both the vegetation and the anima. It is the change in perspective that is required and this means a relationship at a policy level between the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Education. The hon. Minister of I&B is sitting here. Shri Chandan Mitra has rightly drawn your attention. Earlier she was a Minister of Tourism. In addition the media have to spread the idea that we as human species can only survive if the environment, tiger and all other animals and bird species survive. This is the basic thing. Thank you.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH : Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, a large number of Members have made very many points, I will try to respond some points, which I can respond to very easily. Some of the issues that have been raised require some further information and clarification, which I will get and respond

to each Member individually. Let me start with hon. Member of Rajasthan, Dr. (Shrimati) Najma Heptulla. The hon. Member will be pleased to know that yesterday in the Budget speech, she may recall, for the very first time a mention was made of the Zoological Survey of India and the hon. Finance Minister has given a special grant of Rs.15 crore for the renewal of Zoological Survey of India and another Rs.15 crore for the renewal of Botanical Survey of India. The Botanical Survey of India, which is in Kolkata, was set up in 1886. The Zoological Survey of India, which is also headquartered in Kolkata, was set up in 1916. These are major monuments to the ecological security of our country and for the first time, I am pleased to say, yesterday's Budget speech recognised the centrality of these institutions. I hope that with this additional funds that have been granted, we will be able to renew these institutions. You will be pleased to know, Madam, that I visited both these institutions last week in Kolkata and I was quite surprised to find that even though we have a hundred year history we have never had the International Geological Congress or the International Botanical Congress in India. So, I have bid now for the 2020 International Zoological Congress and the 2021 International Botanical Congress in Kolkata. I am sure that I am not going to be there in that year. But I hope that in 2020-21 these institutions will get the international prominence that they deserve. Sir. she also spoke about birds. We have a very important national wetland programme for preservation of our mangroves and the preservation of our wetlands. These are all manifestations of our policy that we consider ecological restoration not just from tiger point of view, but from entire species chain point of view, and I would be pleased to share with the House, on another occasion, all the work that we are doing on ecological restoration of wetlands. A couple of days ago, I was at the Dal Lake. I travelled all over the 25 sq. kilometres of Dal and I found, to my surprise, that there are large number of wetlands within the Dal Lake which attract a lot of birds during the winter season, but because of the condition Dal Lake is in today, these have become really atrophied. So, we are actually starting a very major programme on eco-restoration of the Dal Lake, as an example. So, I just want to re-assure the hon. Member that tigers are critical, but there are other species as well. We are running a programme on the preservation of snow leopards. Just as tigers represent forests; snow leopards represent mountains. We have started the programme for conservation of snow leopards. In Dr. Karan Singh's own State, I announced a new programme for the conservation of the Hangul, which is an endangered species. We are looking at various species in different parts of the country, and whichever species is in danger, we will try to restore its prominence. The Cheetah, just to give you an example, is the only mammal that has become extinct in India in one thousand years. We are now trying to bring the Cheetah back into India, We have to get Cheetah from abroad. We have to go through a lot of scientific protocol, and I hope in the next few months, we will be in a position to re-introduce the Cheetah in captivity and, sooner rather than later, into the wild as well.

Sir, on the issues that have been raised today, first of all, I am grateful to the hon. Member, Mr. Rajiv Pratap Rudy, for making a series of very important points which go not just to the tiger

conservation effort but to the larger issue of forestry management. I want to re-assure him that the interests of the Indian Forest Service are paramount as far as I am concerned because forests are in the global debate on climate change; forests are absolutely critical. We have to protect our forests. We have to regenerate our forests. We have large areas of degraded forests on which we have to bring back the green cover and I entirely agree with him and I will be sharing with him the detailed information on what we are doing to bring back the importance that the forestry sector deserves. I agree with him that in the last couple of decades, somehow, the forestry has receded in importance. But, I am determined to change that, and I would like to just inform the hon. Member again, in yesterday's Budget speech, just before the mention of the Botanical Survey of India and the Zoological Survey of India, the hon. Finance Minister gave a special grant of Rs.100 crores to the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education. It is for the first time in a Budget speech that forestry has been recognised as a separate sector. So, I think these are winds of change. We have a very concerned and sensitive Prime Minister on issues of conservation and because of the global environment and climate change, many of these issues are becoming important. I think the point that he made on forestry is absolutely critical. Sir, he has raised some issues on relocation. A point was made by hon. Nominated Member, Dr. Chandan Mitra, as well, that there is a protocol under which this relocation takes place, We have relocated two tigresses into Panna from Kanah and Bandhavgarh. We have relocated two tigresses and one tiger to Sariska from Ranthambore. It goes on a protocol. There is some controversy. Scientists themselves are divided on the efficacy of this relocation. In fact, I am getting the criticism, as hon. Member mentioned, that there is an inbreeding danger because the ones that have been relocated to Sariska have come from only Ranthambore. So, some scientists have. told me that we should get a larger base population from which we relocate. I want to assure the hon. Member that these are scientific issues which I am looking at. I am consulting as large a scientific community as possible. We have some excellent wildlife scientists in India. Sir, we have a Wildlife Research Institute at Dehradun and it would be my endeavour to bring out the best which the modern science offers to this issue.

Sir, time and again, every Member has raised the question of numbers of tigers like we used to have 4,000 tigers and now we have only 1,400 tigers. Sir, I want to take the House into confidence, and with full responsibility as the Minister for Environment and Forests, I want to make a statement that may appear to be shocking to all the Members. The truth is that all the previous methods of estimation of tigers were faulty. We have had no scientific basis for statements like 'the Sunderbans has 200 tigers', or, 'the Simlipal has 250 tigers'. The method that we adopted was the pugmark method and the same pugmark used to be counted on more than one occasion. I have to admit this on the floor of the House. The old method of estimation was faulty. We now have a new method,

developed by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and the Wildlife Institute. It is not a Census. Moinul Saheb, it is not a Census. It is a sampling method. It is based on tiger destiny. It is based on camera trap, which is an internationally-accepted method. According to the old method of estimation, the estimated numbers of tigers in India is anywhere between 1,040 and 1,600. We don't have a precise number. We don't have to argue about a precise number. But I do want to say that the hon. Member should be careful in using all numbers prior to 2005-06 because those methods are not comparable to the methods that we are adopting today. We are going to be carrying out estimation once every four years. I would like this estimation to be done once in two years. I want to assure the hon. House that whatever we do, we will do openly. It will be done transparently and it would be done through a process of scientific peer review where the best scientists, both in India and abroad, will contribute to enabling our understanding of whether our methods are up to date or not.

Sir, I agree that Sansar Chand's case has dragged on for quite sometime, I will take up this matter with the Attorney General today and find out whether we can think of fast-track mechanism for poaching cases under the Wildlife (Protection) Act. This is.a very good suggestion given by the hon. Member and I agree that if we can make an example out of the case that is already being heard, I am sure, it will have a large impact on the rest of the poaching cases. There are other cases in the pipeline and I will discuss them with the Attorney General as to how we can take this forward.

Sir, a number of questions have been raised on the involvement of local communities. I want to address this issue. The hon. Member from Tamil Nadu also raised .his issue. It is my endeavour that we will begin with Corbett. I want to begin with Corbett because it is of historic importance where Dr. Karan Singh inaugurated the Project Tiger on 1st April, 1973. I have already spoken to the Van Gujjar community. There are about 200 families there. We are going to try and induct them as para-police professionals. We cannot induct them as police because they do not meet the minimum educational requirement of 8th or 9th standard. There are some bureaucratic problems but we will create a social protection force based on the local Van Gujjar community at Corbett. If it works at Corbett, I assure you that we will extend it to other communities as well. I would like to start with Corbett. I had been to Corbett myself. We will make this experiment there and after a few months, we will take it up to other areas where you have local communities. Ranthambore is a good example; Simlipal in Orissa is another good example, and, we will try to create protection forces based on local communities, pay them through Project Tiger. They will be paid; they will be given all facilities, mobility and connectivity. They will be the local protectors of the Project Tiger areas. So, please bear with me till the Corbett experiment is completed, which will be within five to six months from now.

Sir, a lot of technical issues have been raised, which I do not think I need to get into any great detail now. I want to respond to the point made by the hon. Member, Shri Sharad Joshi. We, hon.

Members, are talking of tigers in the wild. We are not talking of tigers in cages. There are 8,000 tigers in America. But they are tigers that have been bred in captivity. I am not interested in replicating the Australian or the Chinese experiment. China has no tigers in the wiid. America has no tigers in the wild. Sixty per cent of the world's tigers are in India and they are all in the wild. They should remain in the wild, because by keeping tigers in the wild, we are protecting our ecosystem.

With great respect to Mr. Sharad Joshi, I respectfully disagree with his suggestion. India will not repeat the Australian experiment on crocodile. India will not repeat the American experiment on tigers. We will preserve tigers in the wild to the extent we can. The task is formidable, but I am sure with the cooperation of States, local communities, and the Centre, we will be able to succeed.

Sir, today, I want to place on record that there are three States in India which account for 50 per cent of India's tiger population and they are doing excellent work. They are, namely, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Uttarakhand. These are the three States which account for 50 per cent of our tiger population.

It was not my intention to bring any politics into this debate. I just mentioned Bihar because Bihar is the only State which has not signed the MoU with the Centre. Bihar is the only State that has not posted a Project Director for the Valmiki Tiger Reserve. Please do not misunderstand me. I am not trying to bring politics into this.

I mentioned the Panna, because it is drawing headlines. I agree with you that even in States like Andhra Pradesh, we have problems with the tiger reserves, and we are looking into this. But I do want to say that there is some excellent work going on in the Project Tiger area in Madhya Pradesh. Excellent work is being done in Karnataka and in Uttarakhand, and our responsibility is to replicate this.

The hon. Member gave a specific example of the Kanha. I have tried to find facts of the case. I will get back to him with detail. But my information is that the errant Project Director has actually been transferred. He has been moved out of the Kanha and quite rightly so. I support the State Government in this initiative. I have written to the State Chief Minister offering all our assistance and I have given about 14 action points what the State can do to avoid the type of disaster that we had in the Panna.

I will be glad to share this communication with you, because I think we are together in this cooperative venture. This is not something which requires political posturing, But it requires the cooperative effort I think the hon. Member wants to say something. I yield.

SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY: It was first raised by Mr. Chandan. Do we have plans of getting into a Central legislation which could provide for a stricter punishment to the poachers and those who indulge in this. Laws are not good enough at this point in time to punish them. Do you have something like this in mind? That is very important. Recently, about two weeks ago, one tiger was killed in Goa. Do we have something like this? That is very important.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, this is a very large issue. But I want to take the House into confidence. Separately, I am seeking approval of the Cabinet. We have already floated a proposal for the approval of the Cabinet for setting up a National Green Tribunal. The National Green Tribunal is going to be an environmental court which is going to hear all cases relating to violation of laws dealing with environment and forests. I am glad to inform the hon. House that the Attorney-General has supported this proposal. This is a recommendation of the 186th Report of the Law Commission. We have adequate support of the judiciary. It is my hope that sooner rather than later I will be able get the approval of the Cabinet for this proposal.

Once we have the National Green Tribunal, we will address some of the issues that the hon. Members talked about. They are: the delays in prosecution, the delays in registering of cases and so on. If the Act requires to be redone, I am quite willing to have a look at the Act. If the hon. members have suggestions in this regard, I will look into it.

I might inform the hon. Members that we have already set up a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau in the Ministry of Environment and Forests. Senior officers have been posted in the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau. But, I take the point that has been made and I wiill male sure that we strengthen it, give it some teeth administratively and if legal changes are required and if hon. Member point out specific suggestions to me, I would be only too glad to consider them.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: One minute.

DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Sir, I congratulate you for your commitment. There are opinions of people as to why these tigers or rhinos were killed. It is because they have got special values. उसके पंजे का नाखून गले मे पहनो, तो लकी होता है, उसकी चर्बी खाओ तो फायदा होता है। Now, these things are social misconceptions which have to be advertised on television. That is the reason why China is buying these tigers because they use them in medicines.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We have exceeded the times ...*(Interruptions)*... One minute, Mr. Anil Lad also wants to speak.

SHRI ANIL H. LAD (Karnataka): Sir, I would like to say that I was from the wildlife department. I was the wildlife warden in Bellary, Karnataka. I would like to request the Minister that the nurseries in the forest departments today are only raising the non-fruitable trees. Because of the non-fruitable trees, there is no bird life in the forest. They are given a target to only raise green trees. They are only raising the Nigiris and the other fast-growing trees which do not give any fruits. Because of that, many elephants are entering into the farms. They are not having sufficient food in the forest. Because of that, deer population is not growing. Once the deer and barking deer population grows, the tiger population will also grow. That is my idea. Thank you.

SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH: Sir, to get back to the point that the hon. Member was making, it is true that there is a .demand for tiger parts which is leading to poaching. We have an MoU with China on tiger conservation. We are part of the global tiger initiative and it is my intention to take this up as aggressively as possible in all international forums. There is a huge demand. If you go to Bangkok, you will see why there is this demand for tiger parts. It is because of the magical properties associated with certain tiger parts. So, I think, these are issues that we are dealing with on bilateral basis. I must admit that we have not had much success. But, we can certainly do much more to control poaching. This is the point which I was trying to make. With the help of local community, through a fast track judicial mechanism, through strict police action and through making some sample cases like Sansar Chand, I think, we will send a message to the rest, of the country that we are serious about conserving the tigers.

Sir, I have not been able to respond to each and every point that has been made. But, I shall do so. I have taken extensive notes. I will respond to each of the hon. Members individually. I want to thank the hon. Members for taking this opportunity. Thank you very much, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Joshiji, we are exceeding the time. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRI SHARAD ANANTRAO JOSHI: Sir, I will make the point in one minute. Sir, the Minister has pooh - poohed the idea of preserving tigers in captivity. But, in agriculture, we have gene banks and when your stock of tigers in the forest is exhausted, you have to come back to us to get the genes. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House is adjourned till 2 o'clock for lunch.

The House then adjourned for lunch at fourteen minutes past one of the clock.

The House re-assembled after lunch at one minute past two of the clock,

(MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN in the Chair)

THE BUDGET (RAILWAYS) 2009-10

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now, we will take up General Discussion on the Budget (Railways) 2009-10. The Leader of the Opposition, Shri Arun Jaitley.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU (Karnataka): Sir, where is the Minister?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Shri E. Ahammed is there.

SHRI M. VENKAIAH NAIDU: No. Shri Ahammed is there definitely. There is no problem about that. But when the Opposition is opening the debate, you always expect that the Cabinet Minister is there in the House.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): She is there in the Lok Sabha, My senior colleague will be here any time.